

LONG RANGE PLANNING TASK FORCE
Earl Bennett Building – 2nd Floor
February 8, 2005
4:00 p.m.

Gary Hall called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

CITY REPRESENTATION

The representatives for the three cities are as follows:

Whitefish -	Chris Conklin, alternate Velvet Sullivan, member
Columbia Falls	Schaub Tad Rosenbery
Kalispell	Pam Kennedy Jim Patrick The alternate has not yet been chosen

MINUTES APPROVAL

Pam Kennedy made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2005 meeting as presented. Jerry Nix seconded the motion. Joe Russell stated that the minutes noted that a comment was made by Russ Crowder that no county representatives attended any of the Growth Policy meetings. Russell stated that he attended two of those meetings. Russell added that he should have addressed this at the last meeting and he wants to make it known now. Question was called. Motion carried unanimously.

VOTE ON TASK FORCE NAME

Discussion was held as to the official name of the task force. Hall presented some other possibilities such as “Foresight 4 The Flathead”, “Vision 2010-2025”, AND “Flathead County Comprehensive Long Range Plan”.

Karen Reeves felt that the name should not be changed. Johna Morrision suggested that they stay away from the Flathead County Comprehensive Long Range Plan because they don’t want to confuse this planning effort with the Growth Policy.

Serrent stated that he would like to see a name representing what they are doing. The word “vision” shows what they are doing and implies the date. Long Range tells what they are doing.

Nix – if we are successful, this will be a essential tool that will be on-going for the cities and the county. Goals and objectives will change on a regular basis. Anticipate county

will have a lot of problems as the county grows. Long Range....is something that will always be representing what they are doing. Keep it as it is.

Vote –

Long Range Planning Task Force – 9

Vision 2010-2025 Task Force – 5

PRESENTATION BY TOM REYNOLDS FROM FLATHEAD COUNTY GIS OFFICE

Reynolds made a presentation on the new GIS website, showing what information is available on this site that will assist this group in their efforts. He was able to depict on the map where the subdivision growth has taken place going back to 1980. The information he presented showed parcels created through subdivision review, not parcels created through occasional sales surveys and family transfer surveys. Reynolds stated that he would attempt to compile the survey information. Reynolds added that Positive Systems flew over the valley taking aerial photographs. This information is an overlay in the GIS system.

Myrt Webb stated that 2/3 of the people coming to the valley aren't just living inside the urban areas, they are moving outside into the rural areas. This creates an impact on services. The valley has the potential of increasing in population up to 90,000 in 2010 and up to 113,000 in 2025. The current rate of growth is 1,430 persons per year. This information doesn't address second homes where people actually live elsewhere. These people still require services. Webb added that the subdivision information doesn't always depict an accurate representation of where people are actually living. There are other indicators such as solid waste pickup.

Gary Hall asked if the neighborhood plans are available on the GIS system. Reynolds responded that there is a map overlay for the 11 neighborhood plans. Reynolds added that they can add any layers requested as long as there is data available, such as lakes and streams, septic data and well data.

Discussion turned to transportation and roads. While the county road department does do traffic counts, this information has not been added to the GIS site. Information that is available is location, ownership and status of the road surface.

Reynolds presented the population projections for Flathead County. The current and projected populations are as follows

1990 - 59,219

2000 – 74,471

2003 – 78,339

2010 – 89,000

2025 – 104,000

PRESENTATION BY PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

Don Hines, Chairman of the Flathead County Planning Board, introduced the other members of the Board. He noted that every board member is putting forth at least 10 hours per week just for the planning board. They are currently working on the Growth Policy. They are in the process of picking out a consultant to assist in this process, as the Growth Policy is to be completed by October of 2006.

Hines stated that 82% of the land in Flathead County is owned by either the city, county, state or feds. Approximately 6-7% of lands is owned by Plum Creek, Stoltze Lumber, American Timber, leaving very little property available to the public. The Planning Board held 17 meetings around the county looking for input into the growth policy. They compiled all of this information into a data base to assist them in writing the policy. This policy is on hold until they hire the consultant.

Robinson – We are looking at four companies to interview. Two of the companies are from Wyoming and have worked in a lot of rapidly growing areas.

Hines – The Planning Board decided to work with this company and work with our information and keep that company away from the public. Person will work directly with planning board and staff will provide assistance in writing this policy. Should be able to have a plan put together soon. Plan must be reviewed every five years. The existing growth policy is dated 1987.

Calaway – when we started, we really thought we knew where to go. After we started, we found there are too many issues to deal with. We can't do it ourselves so that is why we are looking at hiring the consultant. The growth around the urban areas will grow so much faster than rural. I feel that our growth policy will address this. Keep rural and encourage cluster development. We need to encourage this more and reward the cluster concept. Give a better bonus for those people who are willing to cluster and keep open space.

Robin – Hiring an advisor – we have accomplished a great deal and obtained a lot of valuable information that is available to use. Working together with what we have and include experts and consultant will assist us.

Hines – growth policy – pro-active approach rather than reactive. More cooperation between cities and county. A lot of people working together to get this worked out. We encourage people to attend meeting. This group has a whole different perspective and vision than the people have had at our meetings. You will be reaching a different group of people. We will continue to have large public meetings to obtain public input.

Calaway- the last year I have been on the planning board is a huge task. Data from GIS is invaluable to our efforts. Work of planning board over last two years has quite an effect and giving us a sense of feel of what the community is looking for. This group will do well. Look forward to this group's input.

Other tasks that need to be accomplished after the growth policy is completed is updating the lakeshore regulations, subdivision regulations, flood plane regulations and zoning regulations.

Robison – natural resource document within growth policy. One of the largest sections in the policy. I hope we can get people to offer input for this.

Hall – how can we, without crossing over, do what you are doing, help you without crossing over. If we are looking at our vision how can we help you? During the next 18 months is there something we can do to compliment what you are doing with your growth policy?

Calaway – dealing with transportation. How many cities did not plan for transportation. Designing a road system into the planning process. I hope we can direct the growth based on the proposed road system.

Hines – water/sewer also – have multiple municipal systems in the valley. Combine into regional system? New technology to address needs in outlying areas. Get some direction and cooperation between all of the districts and systems.

Robison – transportation corridors. Commercial/residential/ need to work together.

Calaway – planning water/sewer along with roads so you don't end up tearing apart what is done –

Book available – “Montana Growth Policy Resource Book”

Nix – you have a lot of information on all of the neighborhood meetings. Would it be possible to meet with you to get your comments and thoughts that came out of those meetings so we can pick up as much information as you did without rewriting.

Hines – yes – we can meet and I will take time to meet with you and give you information. Remember that this task force is looking into the future rather than the present issues.

Calaway – maps that we came up with. The GIS site is where you will find a lot of this information. You need to envision where future growth will take place.

Donna – school trust candidate advisory committee – had proposal that went to state – product was quite exciting. Due to diverse nature of the group – had sub-committee that worked with other groups to come up with information – is planning board open to working with this group?

Yes.

Jim Patrick – thank planning board for all that you do.

VISION STATEMENT

Gary Hall asked for all members to come up with their own vision statement. He would like to put together 8 to 12 bullet points on what this group would like to accomplish.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

All of the members were assigned various communities throughout the United States and asked to present a report on how these communities were addressing growth issues. Hall presented a report on the Palm Coast Florida. Myrt Webb reported on Gillette Wyoming. Diana Blend reported on Bozeman Montana. Donna Maddux reported on Mesquite Arizona. Karen Reeves reported on Trendon New Jersey and Santa Fe New Mexico.

VOTE ON CHAIRMAN and VICE-CHAIRMAN

Diana Blend nominated Jerry Nix as Chairman of the Task Force. Joe Russell made a motion to close the nominations. All in favor of Jerry Nix to serve as Chairman.

Jerry Nix nominated Joe Russell as Vice-Chairman of the Task Force. Charlie Johnson made a motion to close the nominations. All in favor of Joe Russell to serve as Vice-Chairman.

Gary Hall nominated Lesli Schreiner to serve as Recording Secretary. Pam Kennedy made a motion to close the nominations. All in favor of Lesli Schreiner to serve as Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF BY-LAWS

Dennis Hester, Deputy County Attorney, drafted a set of by-laws for review and adoption by the Task Force.

Diana Blend questioned the section regarding voting. At the last meeting, it was decided that all matters would be approved by consensus rather than by a vote. The language within the by-laws indicates that all matters shall be decided by a roll call vote.

Pam Kennedy questioned whether the members should take more time in reviewing these by-laws. She suggested that the members review the proposed by-laws and discuss them at the next meeting. By that time, they can determine the difference between a vote and a consensus.

It was pointed out that they need to develop the vision statement. They know the duties of the officers, but what about the duties of the members. They need to define the roles and responsibilities of all of the members.

Donna Maddux – do we need by-laws? Or just an agreement on operational procedures? Need to set some ground rules. By-laws vs. operation agreement

Nix – are we not an advisory board to County Commissioners? Hester – yes. You will make recommendations to the county commissioners. The rules of how you operate are within the by-laws. You can put them in any format you want. It's good to have a set of by-laws in place.

Hall – we felt that by-laws should be done.

Joe – would like to explore this more. Just because of having the voting mechanism in here shouldn't conflict with desire for consensus. Would like to have another meeting on the by-laws. Definitely need to talk more about this.
All in agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Gary Hall asked for a public comment period.

Don Hines stated that there will be a member from the Planning Board attending all of the Task Force meetings. He thanked everybody for allowing them to speak at this meeting.

Mayre Flowers stated that she represents Citizens for a Better Flathead. She feels this is a very exciting process. They want to support and contribute in any way they can. Having the visual tool from GIS is great. She congratulated everybody on a good start on a good effort.

REGULAR MEETING DATE AND TIME

After discussion, it was agreed that the Flathead County Planning Task Force will meet on the 2nd Thursday of every month from 4:00 to 6:00. The next meeting will be on March 10.

Jerry Nix – request of cities – spoke earlier of prioritizing if you have anything on priority basis that you would like us to accomplish, appreciate knowing what your issues are and how we might be able to resolve those issues. General objective – as we get closer, need to work on tangible goals so we have a sense of accomplishment. Not just a general ideology

Adjourn at 6:10 p.m.